

The Historian's Toolkit, Year 1: Scope and Sequence

One Family, Many Stories: A Global Journey through Deep Human History

The Historian's Toolkit, Year 1 is a full year of history written for learners in Grades 1 to 5. Its subject is deep human history, from about 3.2 million years ago to 6,500 years ago, in 34 lessons and five units. Learners begin with their own family and the evidence behind what they know about it. They then turn the same methods on the deep human past. The course places deep human history and a learner's family history within the same human history. What changes when we study deep history is the evidence available.

Two themes run through much of the course. The first is evidence. Every lesson is anchored to something real that was found: a fossil, a tool, a layer of earth, a seed, a channel cut into stone. Learners see what was found, where it was found, and how researchers reasoned from it to what they now know, and they are taught to follow that reasoning. The second is climate. As climate changed over time, so did the places where people could live and the routes they could travel. These changes had a major impact on human migration.

The Sequence

Much of the course sequence follows the evidence for human migration around the world. After the introduction, the course begins with evolution and life in Africa. It then follows different branches of human migration: out of Africa into Arabia, east through Southeast Asia to Australia, north into Ice Age Europe and Siberia, and across Beringia into the Americas. Through Unit 4, lessons follow the order in which current evidence indicates people reached places, rather than treating one region as the center and the rest as background.

Unit 1 (Lessons 1 to 2), History Starts with You: Learners begin with their own family and how they know its story. Lesson 2 introduces artifacts and the questions historians ask of them.

Unit 2 (Lessons 3 to 8), Your Cousins and You: The unit begins with *Australopithecus afarensis*, known from the Lucy fossil, which dates to about 3.2 million years ago. It then moves to the toolmakers of the genus *Homo*, including *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus*, and to evidence for the use of fire. Learners also meet the kinds of humans who lived before and alongside *Homo sapiens*, including Neanderthals and Denisovans. Lessons 7 and 8 introduce the concept that not all hunter-gatherers live the same way. Learners work from the fossil and artifact evidence for how these ancient relatives lived.

Unit 3 (Lessons 9 to 14), Great Journeys: This unit follows *Homo sapiens* out of Africa and across the world. It is also where climate becomes a driver of the story. Learners study layers of earth, called stratigraphy, and dating methods in Lesson 9 while studying the Toba eruption. Lesson 10, When Climate Changes, asks what a shifting climate meant for where people could live and travel, both during and after Ice Ages. Learners reach the coast in Lesson 11, follow the journey out of Africa in Lesson 12, and meet the island innovators of Lesson 13. Lesson 14, Australian

Achievements, ends the unit with the sea crossings people made to reach Australia 65,000 years ago.

Unit 4 (Lessons 15 to 26), Finding Home: Learners meet Neanderthals in Lesson 15 and enter the rainforest of Sri Lanka in Lesson 16, Into the Green Darkness. Lesson 17 examines the people who survived European ice, and Lesson 18 examines the people who painted the Cave of Animals. Lesson 19 crosses the mammoth steppe. Lesson 20 reaches Beringia, a homeland as well as a route. Lesson 21 traces how wolves became dogs. Learners study the deep roots of populations in southern Africa in Lesson 22 and the Jōmon people of Japan in Lesson 23. Then, the ice begins to retreat. Lesson 24, A Melting World, examines that changing environment. Lesson 25 takes learners to Monte Verde in southern Chile, among the oldest known human sites in the Americas. The unit closes in Lesson 26 at Doggerland, a low plain now beneath the North Sea, where people lived when Britain was still part of the European mainland.

Unit 5 (Lessons 27 to 33), Settling In: This unit examines the beginnings of farming and settled life in several parts of the world. Lesson 27 looks at the Natufians in the Fertile Crescent. Lesson 28 moves to the Shangshan people of China, where learners study another independent beginning of farming as the Shangshan began cultivating rice. In Lesson 29, learners meet hunter-gatherers at Guilá Naquitz in Oaxaca, Mexico, who planted squash near the water during the wet season and then moved on, cultivating a crop without settling beside it. Learners follow the spread of farming into Europe in Lesson 30. Lesson 31, The Green Sahara, takes learners to grasslands and shallow lakes where the desert is now, and to the families who herded cattle there until the rains shifted and the sand returned. Lesson 32, Farming at Altitude, goes to the puna of the Andes, where vicuñas grazed on the high slopes while people grew potatoes in the cool highlands and quinoa on the middle slopes. Lesson 33 examines the eel-trapping channels people built at Budj Bim in Australia.

Lesson 34, Our Human Journey, closes the course and brings the year's evidence together.

Lessons 3 to 33 each carry a "Meanwhile, across the world..." section. These sections leave the site the lesson is built on and name what was happening elsewhere in the same window of time, so that a learner studying one place is never left with the impression that nothing was happening in the rest of the world.

Diagrams, Maps, and Colored Photographs

The Text teaches through its diagrams as well as its words. Named models and hypotheses in deep history are abstract, and a diagram makes the reasoning visible in a way a paragraph cannot. Twenty-six diagrams were created for the course. Alongside them the Text carries fifteen maps, many built for this course to show coastlines as they were during Ice Ages, and five more maps in the Student Workbook. Color photographs appear throughout, gathered from Wikimedia Commons and peer-reviewed publications, showing actual art, fossils, landscapes, and artifacts, along with researchers at work and reconstructions of *Australopithecus* and several species of *Homo*.

Most of the diagrams show method. They answer how researchers know a thing, not only what is known. Learners see seven groups of stone flakes refitted to reveal the order of repeated blows at

East Gona 10, one of which contains fourteen pieces from a single sequence. They see burned flint chips clustered across an excavated layer, with the evidence and the interpretation drawn as two separate steps and labeled as such. They see potassium-40 changing into argon-40 at a predictable rate, and which materials each dating method can and cannot date. They see what a midden preserves, why peat at Monte Verde kept wooden poles, knotted cord, and a child's footprint when these would not have been preserved at most other sites, and how a survey ship detects a buried river channel beneath the seafloor.

Several diagrams carry the models by name. Learners study about the hydro-refugia model, which proposes that water refuges helped people and animals survive long dry periods in East Africa and created paths people could follow. They learn about the protracted model of domestication, which holds that plants changed slowly across many generations rather than in a single season, and they see it again in the squash at Guilá Naquitz and the rice at Shangshan. They learn about the demic diffusion model, which explains the spread of farming into Europe as the movement of farming people, and the commensal pathway, one leading model for the beginning of dog domestication.

Three diagrams examine evolutionary theory, showing that no individual wolf turned into a dog and no individual rice plant became domesticated during its lifetime. Populations changed across generations. A learner who encounters that idea in wolves, rice, and squash will develop a more nuanced understanding of how evolution occurs over long timespans.

The Skill Strands

Alongside the history content, each lesson builds skills that are important for developing historical thinking. In the Student Workbook, Think Like a Historian pages give learners a thinking tool and a scenario that calls for it, so the tool gets used and not just defined. Writing About History guides learners as they write about what they have studied, following the Hochman writing method. A Words to Know section in each lesson builds vocabulary. The activities are thoughtfully designed to deepen learners' understanding of the archaeological and scientific principles covered in the Text.

What Is Included

Year 1 includes:

- 1.) the Text, bundled with the Time Travel Passport;
- 2.) the Student Workbook, bundled with the Teacher's Guide;
- 3.) the audiobook, narrated by Dr. Sherri Mehta, bundled with the diagrams and maps from the Text.

Availability

The Text, the Time Travel Passport, the Student Workbook, and the Teacher's Guide release on Monday, August 31, 2026. The audiobook, narrated by Dr. Sherri Mehta, will follow. Year 1 is the first year of The Historian's Toolkit, a multi-year sequence in history, and future years will be announced as each one is ready.